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PLO OFFICIAL DENIES PARTICIPATION AT LARNACA

NC232040Y Cairo MENA in Arabic 2028 GMT 23 Feb 78 NC

[Text] Cairo, 23 February--The PLO representative in Cairo, Sa'id Kamal, has denied reiterated reports about the participation of Palestinian forces with the Cyprus forces in the fighting against Egyptian shock forces in Cyprus. Kamal said that the reports are false, fabricated and aimed at sowing seeds of division and dissension between the Egyptian and Palestinian people. PLO representative in Cairo Sa'id Kamal has stated the following:

Following a telephone conversation at noon today, Thursday, the PLO Executive Committee Chairman brother Yasir 'Arafat to verify what certain papers have published quoting the Washington POST and the HERALD TRIBUNE to the effect that the Palestinian forces participated with the Cyprus forces in the fighting against the Egyptian shock forces in Cyprus, I would like to confirm the following in light of this conversation:

1. The said reports are false, fabricated and tendentious. They are untrue in part and parcel. The object of publishing such reports is to sow seeds of dissension and division between the fraternal Egyptian and Palestinian peoples.

2. We accept the verdict of the Egyptian officials who were present and saw for themselves what happened at Larnaca Airport during the armed clash between the Cypriots and the brother members of the Egyptian shock force. At the time of the clash, no armed Palestinian was among those sent to Cyprus at the request of the Cypriot authorities and as a result of the intercession of the Egyptian and Lebanese ambassadors in Nicosia. The task of the Palestinian mission which had been sent there was to rescue the hostages and hand over the two gunmen to Cypriot authorities in accordance with the agreement reached between brother Yasir 'Arafat and Kiprianou.

3. We demand [mutalib] that Cyprus President Kiprianou hand over the two gunmen to the PLO to undergo a just trial in accordance with the PLO's military law.

In all this it should be borne in mind that the PLO's Executive Committee has issued a statement condemning and denouncing the criminal agent group which assassinated martyr Yusuf as-Siba'i. I am sorry that some foreign papers are trying to deceive the Arab people in Egypt in order to break the ties of fraternity and common destiny between the Palestinian and Egyptian peoples.

VOP ON AS-SADAT'S SPEECH TO EGYPTIAN SOLDIERS

JN232118Y Voice of Palestine [Clandestine] in Arabic to the Arab World 1530 GMT 23 Feb 78 JN

[Unattributed commentary]

[Excerpt] At the meeting between Anwar as-Sadat and those of the Egyptian commando unit who survived the Larnaca operation, As-Sadat talked viciously and furiously to the Egyptian soldiers. He tried to appear like a strong and wild man who would do any and everything to preserve the name and prestige of Egypt, as well as the dignity of its army and people.

As-Sadat's talk to his soldiers who returned from detention in Cyprus was filled with black instigative phrases against the Palestinian people and the Arab nation, in addition to the curses he directed against Cypriot President Kiprianou.

There is no doubt that As-Sadat's fiery speech before the remnants of the commando unit was a strong reaction to the bitter defeat of his unjustified adventure at Larnaca Airport and a coverup of the big scandal to which his regime was exposed as a result of the deceitful terrorist operation which insulted the [word indistinct] of Egypt and the name of its army. There was no convincing reason or logical motive for this operation except that of adventure with the aim of achieving personal glory for an indifferent president who is so far dissatisfied with failure.

As-Sadat talked with feelings of rancor and anger before the army of Egypt, as if trying to [words indistinct] its officers and soldiers and sow sick delusions in their heads of persuading them that [word indistinct] Israel and kneeling before its leaders is a civilized and humane act, whereas assaulting the soil of friendly and allied Cyprus, as well as opening fire against its soldiers in their own country, is the peak of glory, heroism and victory.

As-Sadat, while addressing the people of Egypt, stirring up in them regional inclinations hostile to Palestine and Arabism, and instigating them to avenge their brothers, ignores a fact seen constantly by the Egyptian Army and people; namely, that the [word indistinct] the Egyptian Army is not with that of brothers, friends and allies, but with the Zionist enemy whose soldiers are still in the Sinai and whose airplanes and tanks are still parked on the soil of Egypt. The Zionist enemy is challenging the national honor and all the Egyptian people, pressing hard with all their weight against the Egyptian individuals demanding them to put up their hands in surrender in the face of the Zionist challenge and designs against Egypt and the future of its people.

If As-Sadat tries through his humiliating surrender before the Zionist challenge to prove his complete inability and total loss of will and resistance, he must realize that he will not be able to cover up this humiliating inability with fabricated battles on the borders of Libya or Chad, or showlike and imaginary battles during which the blood of Egypt's sons is shed on the soil of Cyprus. The Egyptian people and army will not be a tool for As-Sadat and a field of experiments for his foolish policies. As-Sadat has been successful for some time in using the army and people of Egypt in such imaginary battles, but he will not succeed in this forever. The Egyptian people will certainly soon discover that those who fire the weapons of death and destruction at the gates of Egypt are not the Palestinians or the Cypriots, but the Zionist occupiers of territory and usurpers of sovereignty.

PLO PAPER HOLDS AS-SADAT RESPONSIBLE FOR LARNACA

JN231900Y Voice of Palestine [Clandestine] in Arabic to Arab World 1430 GMT 23 Feb 78 JN

[Excerpts] The political editor of FILASTIN ATH-THAWRAH, the PLO central organ writes: The campaign of the Egyptian regime and its hireling pens against Palestine and Cyprus is escalating. After the articles written by small hirelings in Egyptian papers against the Palestinian revolution and its struggle and after the slogans which the Egyptian intelligence planned to be raised at the funeral of Yusuf as-Siba'i and of the Egyptian soldiers killed at Larnaca airport, the subject reached a climax yesterday when As-Sadat himself launched an attack against the Palestinian revolution.

We, of course, will not descend to the level of this campaign, the political aims of which we are aware of. We realize that it is meant to relinquish the Palestinian issue rather than direct it against individuals or organizations. We also know that pleasing the Zionist enemy has always demanded that the agents attack the Palestinian issue and the Palestinian revolution in word and deed.

We will not lower ourselves to the level of this campaign, but we say with pride and dignity that Palestine, the Palestinians and the Palestinian revolution, though in need of all friends, do not acquire legitimacy from anybody. Their cause does not continue in [word indistinct] the region and the world except through its justice and right. Their voice will not be clear and loud except through the blood of their martyrs and the struggle of their sons. Palestine and the Palestinian revolution are so great that they cannot be influenced by a slogan planned by the intelligence of any country to be raised on behalf of its people--and the heroic people of Egypt are innocent of anything like this.

To blame others for the death of Egypt's young people and soldiers at Larnaca airport--which is one of the reasons for the campaigns--is not honorable. Moreover, the Larnaca operation lacked (?justification). Neither the Palestinian revolution nor Cyprus President Kiprianou was responsible. The one who was responsible is the one inside Egypt who gave the orders to kill the young people of Egypt. The position of the Palestinian revolution and Palestine is similar to that of President Kiprianou and Cyprus. The struggle of both gives them legitimacy.

The severance of relations bothers neither Palestine nor Cyprus, but definitely bothers the decisionmaker himself. When As-Sadat makes such decisions and takes such measures, he only shows that he is continuing a policy where one failure leads to another and that everything will eventually end in failure as well. The campaign against Palestine and the symbols of its revolution and against Cyprus and its president is in fact an attempt to distract from a complete capitulatory process before the Zionist enemy. It is actually a cover for what is happening in Sinai--if we want to put aside the larger pan-Arab issue. When the Egyptian president refuses to meet with President Kiprianou [words indistinct] his meeting with terrorist Menahem Begin.

QADDUMI MEETS WITH GDR AAPSO DELEGATION

JN2317l0Y Voice of Palestine [Clandestine] in Arabic to Arab World 1515 GMT 23 Feb 78 JN

[Text] Brother Abu al-Lutf, chief of the PLO Political Department, yesterday received the GDR delegation to AAPSO. The talks dealt generally with the Middle East situation.

(Kurt), head of the GDR delegation, expressed the support of his country, people and government for the Palestinian people's struggle led by the PLO,the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, against imperialism and Zionism.

The delegation conveyed the greetings of Erich Honecker, SED general secretary, to brother leader Abu 'Ammar.

QATAR

AL-'ARAB ON OUTCOME OF AL-ASAD'S MOSCOW VISIT

NC231244Y Doha QNA in Arabic 1208 GMT 23 Feb 78 NC

[Text] Doha, 23 February--Qutoing reliable Arab sources, the Qatari newspaper AL-'ARAB says today that the results of Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad's discussions with Soviet leaders were of utmost importance at the Syrian-Soviet relations level and at the level of the Soviet Union's attitude toward developments in the Arab question.

These sources pointed out to the newspaper that the Soviet leaders assured President al-Asad of their readiness to supply Syria with the most modern arms available in the Soviet Union, which the Soviet union has not supplied to the Warsaw Pact member states. These sources said that the Soviet leaders told President al-Asad that the Soviet arms he requested will be ready in 24 hours and stressed that it is up to him to choose the arms he requires.

The sources also said that the Soviet leaders have supported President al-Asad's recent moves in Lebanon and have affirmed to him that the Soviet Union will not remain idle toward any Israeli aggression against the Syrian front or against the Palestinians in southern Lebanon. The sources added that the Soviet leaders have again pledged to the Syrian president to foil the U.S. move regarding the Middle East problem because it does not fulfill Arab aspirations.

SAUDI ARABIA

OIL MINISTER REJECTS USE OF OIL TO PRESSURE ISRAEL

LD240920Y Riyadh Domestic Service in Arabic 0600 GMT 24 Feb 78 LD

[Text] Shaykh Ahmad Zaki Yamani, minister of petroleum and mineral affairs, emphasized the role of the United States as a great power in exercising stronger pressure on Israel and in controlling the situation to achieve a just and lasting peace in the Middle East region. In a statement broadcast last night by Swiss radio and television, his excellency said that peace in the Middle East would be achieved if the United States and Western European countries compel Israel to accept this. He added that the kingdom would not use oil as a weapon of pressure to compel Israel to accept peace because the kingdom believes that such pressure is not the best means of putting pressure on Israel.

Speaking about the future of the proposed Palestinian state, his excellency the minister of petroleum and mineral affairs asserted that the majority of the Palestinians have a responsible policy and (?they do not shirk their responsibility). He said that if there were extremist groups from among the Palestinian ranks and also within the Palestine Liberation Organization, this could happen in any country. His excellency stressed the Kingdom's adherence to the Rabat summit decision which recognizes the organization as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

AS-SADAT SEES SALIM, KAMIL, TALKS ABOUT PEACE

NC2319417 Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic 1830 GMT 23 Feb 78 NC

[Text] President Anwar as-Sadat held a meeting in Ismailia this morning. Prime Minister Mamduh Salim and Foreign Minister Muhammad Ibrahim Kamil attended. Opening the meeting, the president explained that despite the fact that he is having a rest period following his bout with a cold, he will closely follow up the momentum of the peace process, study future stages of the course for solving the Middle East question and will follow up Atherton's efforts and help him to achieve progress which would provide a starting point suitable for the participation of the other parties concerned.

The president explained that Egypt is determined to give momentum to the efforts to establish a just peace in the area and that Egypt's clear lines concentrate on the following two points:

1. No failure to observe terms and no backing down regarding the restoration of the occupied Arab territory, including Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza.

2. The need for all states in the area to establish full soverignty over their territory and the need to restore the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people which were approved at the Arab summit conferences. The security guarantees, in their various forms as agreed upon by all parties concerned, to all states in the area must be adapted to achieve and secure these two aims in order to establish a just and lasting peace in all states in the area.

The president explained that Egypt, which is serious in its efforts to establish peace, believes that the momentum of Atherton's mission in the area will depend on the extent of the efforts which will be exerted to overcome the secondary and side issues which the other party is raising. If this is done it will remove the obstacles and difficulties in the way of establishing peace and will make possible the issuance of a declaration of clear and specific principles confirming the legitimate rights of all parties. This depends on good intentions toward the principal issues.

The president emphasized that his peace initiative and the efforts Egypt is carrying out in the form of international contacts have been and will remain a major factor in pushing forward the peace efforts because of the full understanding with which this initiative and these efforts are received by the quarters making the international decisions, by world public opinion and by all people of the countries that are parties to the conflict in the area.

Muhammad Ibrahim Kamil submitted a detailed report to the president on his discussions in West Germany with Chancellor Helmut Schmidt and Foreign Minister Genscher. The foreign minister said that he ascertained that the president's visit to West Germany has made a deep impression there and that he sensed that the president's initiative continues to be the basis on which the West's understanding of Egypt's seriousness in working for the establishment of peace in the area rests. He added that world public opinion is getting a better understanding of Arab rights.

The president ended the meeting after discussing and studying Egypt's future steps regarding the solution to the Middle East question.

AS-SADAT SENDS MESSAGE TO U.S. RABBI KORFF

NC2318502 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1756 GMT 23 Feb 78 NC

[Text] Washington, 23 February--President Anwar as-Sadat has emphasized that it is imperative for Israel to respond to his peace initiative by withdrawing from the occupied Arab territories and enabling the Palestinians to set up their own state. President Anwar as-Sadat also said that it is imperative for Israel to offer the mutual safeguards required for peace. He explained that security is a two-way street, "particularly if we take into account that it is the Arab territories that are now suffering from occupation." In a message he sent to Jewish Rabbi Baruch Korff, founder of the American Citizenship Conference, which yesterday presented President as-Sadat with an award in appreciation of his initiative, President as-Sadat added that Israel must respond to the measures and obligations undertaken by Egypt by withdrawing from the Arab territories occupied in June 1967 in implementation of the principle of the impermissibility of seizing territory through war and also to enable the people of Palestine to exercise their right to self-determination, which is considered "a basic human right."

In this respect, President as-Sadat emphasized that the "free Palestine" will be a positive force for stability in the Middle East. In his message, which was read on his behalf by Egyptian Minister of State for the People Assembly Affairs Dr Fu'ad Muhyi ad-Din, President as-Sadat said that President Carter assured him during his recent visit to the United States that the United States will continue to play an active role for the establishment of peace in the Middle East.

President as-Sadat added that the United States rightly has a decisive role it must carry out to close the gap among the parties to the conflict in the area. He further said that the United States is in a unique position, which enables it to exercise its influence and good offices. In fact, it is more than a mere mediator. It is my opinion that it is a partner in every sense of the word.

In his message to the American Citizenship Conference, which was attended by more than 400 members of the Senate, House of Representatives, senior American officials and prominent American Jewish leaders, President as-Sadat said that he is happy that U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Alfred Atherton has actually started his new mission between Egypt and Israel. He added: I have great confidence in Atherton's ability and wisdom. He then expressed hope that an agreement will soon be reached on the declaration of principles which will guide us all the way to peace. President as-Sadat emphasized that one of the important factors is to keep the momentum and not waste time, which is considered vital and important in such a process.

In his message President as-Sadat said: "On my part, I am determined to persist in my efforts for peace." He added that he has chosen his fate by devoting his life to achieving peace and that he maintains that it is imperative to create all the opportunities for peace to prevail. President as-Sadat pointed to what he had said in his speech at the National Press Club during his visit to Washington, that is, that he firmly believes that his initiative now belongs to all the peoples of the world. Furthermore this initiative has become part of mankind's conscience.

The President said: "Let us make the Middle East, which is considered the cradle of civilization and the birthplace of the holy religions, an infinite source of knowledge and inspiration for the world in general and a place where peace and understnading prevail."

In his message to the American Citizenship Conference, President as-Sadat said that he had granted Israel everything when he visited and announced our acceptance of Israel in our area following 30 years of bitter war. He added that this represents an enormous step which Israel must not underestimate by saying that "it does not need our recognition."

President as-Sadat pointed to his announcement that Egypt has agreed to implement all the provisions of the Security Council resolution and that Egypt is prepared to end the state of active belligerency, establish peaceful relations, respect the rights of sovereignty, integrity of territory and political independence, and guarantee the security safeguards to all the states in the area.

He said that as far as the question of security is concerned, he had proposed six points during his visit to Jerusalem: the establishment of demilitarized zones, limited armament zones and early warning stations; UN forces on the border modeled after Sharm ash-Shaykh and joint Egyptian-Israeli committees. He also proposed that, consequently, Israel should undertake to reciprocate Egypt's commitments and pledges.

The president pointed out that his peace initiative has been evaluated in many ways. He added: As far as I am concerned, the initiative was a sincere action and a holy mission with which I wanted to break the vicious circle of hatred and suspicion. President as-Sadat stressed that he did not go to Jerusalem to conclude a deal but to achieve peace. He said: I felt that there was a need for a new factor to change the situation suddenly and dramatically.

President as-Sadat then said that he wanted to guarantee the achievement of peace through a psychological process which would bring together the Jewish and Arab nations after years of suffering and mistrust.

In his message President as-Sadat said he has a deep conviction that wars must no longer be the means for settling differences among states. He pointed out again that the October 1973 war would inevitably be the last war in our part of the world if the two sides were to agree to fulfill their commitments under the UN Charter and the principles of international law.

The president said that he was and is still deeply touched by the American people's warm and friendly reaction to his peace initiative. As-Sadat added that the American Citizenship Conference, which represents millions of Americans who are worthy of respect, was among the first groups of citizens to welcome his visit to Jerusalem. President as-Sadat went on: My experience before and after my recent visit to the United States and Europe assures me that I am following the right path. He added: I can assure you that I will never fail the American people, who have given tremendous support to my initiative.

In his message, which was warmly received by the conferees, President as-Sadat said he was grateful for the invitation he had received to attend the ceremony marking the birthday of George Washington, the founding father "of this great nation."

The president added that he regrets that it would have been impossible to return to the United States only a few days following his recently concluded visit during which he had been able to hold fruitful and concerted talks with President Carter and his government, in addition to the members of the House of Representatives and of the Senate. President as-Sadat said: "I hope that you will appreciate this fact. What it boils down to is that in this decisive phase of the Middle East developments, my responsibilities toward this part of the world prevent me from making another visit to the United States at such a moment in time."

Concluding his message to the American Citizenship Conference--an educational institution with 4 million members--President as-Sadat pointed to the conference's role, saying that educational establishments and institutions face a big role to preserve peace and equality in the world through the evaluation of subjective and objective data about the various states and their history, culture and legitimate aspirations. The president explained that by pursuing such a course, states can draw closer and live in peace and harmony.

After presenting the "Statue of Liberty Prize" to Dr Fu'ad Muhyi ad-Din, Rabbi Baruch Korff announced that the American Citizenship Conference has presented two scholarships to Egyptian students to study in U.S. universities. One scholarship is for political science and the other for economics.

Rabbi Korff spoke extensively of the meaning of President as-Sadat's peace initiative. He said that at the long meeting he held with the Egyptian president in Cairo last December, he was convinced that President as-Sadat is a man who has strongly committed himself to achieving peace and to good intentions toward all the peoples.

Before presenting the award, Rabbi Korff invited the conferees to stand in mourning for martyr Yusuf as-Siba'i, secretary general of the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization. He said that As-Siba'i had died at the hands of terrorists. The rabbi expressed sympathy and sincere condolences to Dr Fu'ad Muhyi ad-Din and his delegation. He asked Dr Muhyi ad-Din to convey his condolences to President Anwar as-Sadat.

Senator Robert Dole, who ran for vice president, Senator Russell Long and Congressmen Curtis and Elliot Strauss were among those who praised Egypt's peace initiative during the ceremony. The American Citizenship Conference was attended by all the members of the diplomatic corps in Washington, including diplomats from the Soviet Union, the Arab states and Israel.

AS-SADAT ANSWERS CARTER'S CONDOLENCE CABLE

NC232143Y Cairo MENA in Arabic 2125 GMT 23 Feb 78 NC

[Text] Cairo, 23 February--President Anwar as-Sadat has expressed his appreciation to U.S. President Jimmy Carter for having supported Egypt in its checking of all the perfidious evildoers [al-'abithin] who are blocking the road to security and peace. The above is contained in a telegram sent today by President as-Sadat to President Carter in reply to the cable the U.S. President had sent offering condolences on the death of the martyrs of Larnaca airport in Cyprus.

The following is the text of President Anwar as-Sadat's telegram:

Your Excellency President Jimmy Carter, president of the United States: My dear friend, the telegram you sent containing your condolences on the death of our martyrs in Cyprus and your greetings to our heroic men who had been assigned this humanitarian mission has left me with the best impressions. As I thank Your Excellency for your sincere feelings, I appreciate your support for us in checking all the perfidious evildoers who are blocking the road to security and peace.

I implore God for success. Your Excellency, please accept my sincere sentiment.

PRESS COMMENTS ON REPORTS OF PLO UNITS AT LARNACA

NC240826Y Cairo MENA in Arabic 0720 GMT 24 Feb 78 NC

[Text] Cairo, 24 February--The newspapers AL-AHRAM and AL-JUMHURIYAH today comment on yesterday's denial by Sa'id Kamal, deputy head of the PLO Political Department and PLO representative in Cairo, that Palestinian forces joined the Cyprus forces in the fighting against the Egyptian shock force in Cyprus.

AL-AHRAM says: If, for the sake of argument, we accept Sa'id Kamal's statement that the PLO was innocent of the treachery which claimed the lives of the Egyptian shock force martyrs at Larnaca airport, will the PLO representative tell us who instigated the assassination of martyr Yusuf as-Siba'i? Who instigated the original crime, which took the life of a man who had defended the cause of Palestine for 22 years?

The paper asks: Will brother Sa'id Kamal tell us who is the official who daily attacks Egypt flagrantly in the newspaper FALASTIN ATH-THAWRAH? And, furthermore, what does Sa'id Kamal, who talks about the common fate, have to say about the statements of Abu Iyad, the number two man in the organization, against Egypt? And finally, what does the PLO representative have to say about international terrorism carried out by hired traitors who are regrettably Palestinians?

AL-JUMHURIYAH says: Sa'id Kamal denies that the Palestinians participated in the murder of the Egyptian shock force members, but who is responsible for the assassination of Yusuf as-Siba'i? Who is responsible for the crimes of Zuhayr Muhsin in Syria and Lebanon, who is responsible for the insolence of Abu Iyad, and who is responsible for the press attacks by Palestinian leaders in the hired newspapers of Al-Qadhdhafi and the other rejectionists?

It adds: Have they not rejoiced at the death of Egyptian fighters who were also among the heroes of the crossing, and, is it brave or even polite to rejoice at the death of heroes?

Further AL-AHRAM Comment

LD240144Y Cairo MENA in Arabic 2335 GMT 23 Feb 78 LD

[Press review]

[Excerpt] Cairo, 23 February--The papers comment on the Larnaca airport operation and the recent reports that Palestinian units participated with the Cypriot forces against the Egyptian shock forces. AL-AHRAM says that if these reports are true then the PLO and the resistance factions of the various affiliations have made the mistake of their lives and have gambled with both their past and future.

The paper says that there is certain evidence that these reports are true, while there is also evidence to the contrary. Therefore, we must weigh the two and investigate the truth fully before we pass this serious judgment for or against the PLO.

The paper refers in this regard to the irresponsible threats that preceded the assassination of Yusuf as-Siba'i, which were made by responsible leaders in the PLO following the peace initiative during which President as-Sadat visited Jerusalem. Threats were made to assassinate all those who accompanied President as-Sadat on his trip and to shed the blood of anyone who opposes the PLO and the rejectionist front in their stands.

Even if these threats were not serious, the paper continues, they have given the green light to the extremist and foolish elements in the ranks of the Palestinians to go ahead and commit their stupid crimes. Such threats could also corroborate the Washington POST story that the Palestinian forces that were brought to Cyprus under the pretext of participating in the negotiations with the killer terrorists had in the end participated in the massacre of the Egyptian forces.

On the other hand, the paper adds, certain parties probably have an interest in seeing that the break between Egypt and the PLO is final and categorical so as to influence the possibilities of a comprehensive settlement in the Middle East. The paper stresses that Egypt, which has sacrificed so much for the sake of the Palestinian problem, is inclined, by feelings and emotions, toward believing the second possibility in the hope that the truth will be established and that reason will refute the first possibility.

AL-AKHBAR: PLO RESPONSIBLE FOR AS-SIBA'I KILLING

LD232332Y Cairo AL-AKHBAR in Arabic 22 Feb 78 p 5 LD

[Article: "Who Is Responsible?"]

[Excerpts] Who is responsible for the bullets that killed martyr Yusuf as-Siba'i and for those who fired them?

Do not say that Hafiz al-Asad or Al-Qadhdhafi or Boumediene are responsible. Do not say that Iraq or the Iraqi intelligence are responsible.

The two killers are Palestinians, and a certain organization that claims to be the sole representative of the Palestinian people and to have the right to speak on behalf of the Palestinians, this organization alone is responsible for assassinating As-Siba'i.

There are no two ways about it: Either this organization indeed represents the Palestinians and is, therefore, supposed to be able to control those it represents, or it is incapable of having such control and, therefore, should no longer claim the right to represent the Palestinians.

The organization's disavowal of responsibility for the assassination of martyr Yusuf as-Siba'i and for previous similar crimes of assassination, kidnaping, terror, blackmail, robbery and plunder does not absolve it of responsibility. It only absolves it of the honor of representing the Palestinians. The organization, in view of its shameful inability to exercise control, has no right to claim such honor.

If it insists on claiming that it is the sole representative of the Palestinians then, according to the simple logic, we cannot but hold it responsible for all these actions and suspect that it is behind these actions and, consequently, behind the crime of assassinating martyr As-Siba'i.

We do not care if the organization declares that these actions are the work of Palestinian groups that do not belong to it. This does not concern us or interest us or change the situation in the least. We are not and should not be responsible for the impotence of this organization which is unable to prove to us or to the world that it is capable of "uniting" the ranks, attitudes and actions of the Palestinians whom it claims to represent.

We are not and should not be responsible for the factionalizing of the Palestinians and its consequences. As long as this organization insists that it is the sole representative of the Palestinians, then it is "solely" responsible for every crime committed by Palestinians, exactly as a state is responsible for the actions of its citizens.

Therefore, we can see only a single party responsible for the crime of assassinating martyr As-Siba'i: The one responsible is the PLO. If the PLO insists that it is not responsible for what the "Palestinians" do, then it is our right to ask it to stop claiming to be the "sole" representative of the Palestinians. At the same time the whole world has a right to wait for the emergence of a "real representative" of the Palestinian people quite capable of total control of all its "citizens" and of indeed unifying the stands and actions of the Palestinians.

In fact, the matter is extremely grave and important for the following reasons:

With regard to the ugly crime that victimized martyr Yusuf as-Siba'i, the 40 million Egyptians are excused when they shouted at the martyr's funeral against everything that is Palestinian. Their excuse is that so far they could not find anyone before them to bring to account. Their excuse is that they find before them such a large number of organizations that bear the name of Palestine, each claiming to represent the Palestinians. Consequently, when a crime is committed such as the assassination of martyr As-Siba'i, the responsibility is lost. Therefore, there is no alternative for the people but to consider "all the Palestinians" responsible for "all these crimes" until a Palestinian entity capable of shouldering the responsibility in full comes into being.

The masses are excused if they "mutinied" against pampering and showing patience toward the Palestinians. They are excused if they wondered bitterly: "Why should we sacrifice and be killed for the sake of a cause whose subjects kill us? Why should we make sacrifices for the sake of gangs of killers or of groups that chose nightclubs and cabarets as their permanent residence, or of a group of merchants and rich people who enjoy the wealth of our country and yet they turn against us, insult us, and attack our country and president?"

This organization--the PLO--is alone and solely responsible before us and before the world opinion. If it insists on being the representative of the Palestinians, then it must do something to prove this regarding the crime of assassinating martyr As-Siba'i. Otherwise, every one of its officials should shut his mouth and let a statement be issued declaring its "bankruptcy."

As for us the Egyptians it is indeed regrettable that many of us should say: "Hafiz al-Asad was right when he hanged them on scaffolds in a public square. He was right and still was when he slaughtered them in Tall az-Za'tar. Ever since they have been behaving like sheep with him and have never been able to raise their heads."

KAMIL: CYPRUS TIES DEPEND ON HANDLING OF TERRORISTS

NC232013Y Cairo MENA in Arabic 2007 GMT 23 Feb 78 NC

[Text] Cairo, 23 February--Replying to a question about Egyptian-Cypriot relations, Foreign Minister Muhammad Ibrahim Kamil stated that the position on this subject basically depends on how Cyprus behaves toward the two terrorists who killed Yusuf as-Siba'i. He said: If the Cyprus Government adopts a sound stand, I believe that matters will be resolved.

CYPRIOT AMBASSADOR SOTIRIADHIS LEAVES CAIRO

NC240645Y Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic 0500 GMT 24 Feb 78 NC

[Text] Yesterday evening the Cypriot ambassador, Andis Sotiriadhis, left Cairo for home after being informed of the decision to suspend diplomatic relations. The Egyptian ambassador in Cyprus, Hasan Shash, and the staff of the Egyptian Embassy there are expected to arrive in Cairo. Meanwhile, the Cyprus Airways flights to Cairo ceased as of yesterday.

KAMIL MEETS WITH U.S. ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE

NC231738Y Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic 1700 GMT 23 Feb 78 NC

[From the newsreel]

[Text] The talks between Foreign Minister Muhammad Ibrahim Kamil and U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Alfred Atherton began at the Foreign Ministry this evening. Here are more details from our correspondent Hamdi Jawhar: [begin recording]

At the outset of the talks, Mr Atherton outlined the results of his discussions with the Israeli officials in Jerusalem on the declaration of principles and the Israeli proposals on a comprehensive and lasting settlement of the Middle East crisis. The Egyptian foreign minister will explain the Egyptian view of the bases which must be included in the declaration of principles to achieve a comprehensive, durable and just settlement of the Middle East crisis.

The U.S. assistant secretary of state arrived in Cairo yesterday within the context of his tour of the Middle East states to hold contacts on reaching an agreement on the declaration of principles which would define the bases for a comprehensive settlement of the Middle East crisis. On arrival in Cairo, Atherton said that his current tour of the Middle East is in implementation of the promise U.S. President Carter made to President Anwar as-Sadat during their discussions at Camp David that the United States will intensify its efforts to achieve peace in the Middle East. [end recording]

Kamil, Atherton End Talks

NC232059Y Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic 2000 GMT 23 Feb 78 NC

[Text] Following his discussions with Mr Atherton, the U.S. assistant secretary of state, Foreign Minister Muhammad Ibrahim Kamil this evening said that the presence of Atherton in the area confirms the continuation of the U.S. interest in the problem and in urging the parties to agree on a declaration of principles which would lead to a comprehensive settlement.

Kamil added that he listened to the ideas Atherton brought with him from Israel and that he himself informed Atherton of the Egyptian ideas so that he may present them to the other side.

Muhammad Ibrahim Kamil also said that following President Anwar as-Sadat's visit to the United States, U.S. President Carter promised to double the American efforts to achieve a comprehensive settlement. This is the reason for Atherton's current visit to us and to Israel. We hope that he will realize his aims. Muhammad Ibrahim Kamil then said: we will exploit every opportunity, as President as-Sadat put it, to achieve peace. He expressed the hope that something positive will soon be achieved in this regard.

Alfred Atherton said that he held useful talks in Cairo and that these talks complete the discussions Presidents as-Sadat and Carter had on the declaration of principles of the comprehensive settlement. He added that he will return to Israel, perhaps tomorrow or the day after, to convey the ideas he heard in Cairo. He further said that he will exchange views tomorrow with President Muhammad Anwar as-Sadat on the telephone because of President as-Sadat's heavy engagements. He added: We will meet more than once in order to reach agreement on the declaration of principles, which will expand the base to allow the participation of the other parties concerned.

In conclusion, Atherton said: The United States is presently communicating the ideas of both sides to each other. We will have our own ideas at the appropriate time to narrow the differences. The discussions between the Egyptian and American sides are scheduled to be resumed during the luncheon Muhammad Ibrahim Kamil will host tomorrow in honor of Atherton.

Specific Points Submitted

NC240654Y Cairo MENA in Arabic 0642 GMT 24 Feb 78 NC

[Text] Cairo, 24 February--The newspaper AL-AHRAM says today that during yesterday's 3-hour working session, Egypt submitted to U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Alfred Atherton a number of specific points in connection with the declaration of principles which call for Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories and the recognition of the Palestinian rights. The paper adds that Egypt's proposals were in reply to the proposals the Israeli side submitted to Atherton during his talks in Jerusalem.

MENA CARRIES AS-SIBA'I'S LAST REPORT TO AAPSO

NC231230Y Cairo MENA in Arabic 1120 GMT 23 Feb 78 NC

[Text] Cairo, 23 February--The report martyr Yusuf as-Siba'i presented to the special meeting of the AAPSO presidium stressed that a solution to the Middle East problem is linked to a solution of the core of the conflict, which has lasted 30 years, namely, full recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and Israeli unconditional withdrawal from all the occupied Arab territory.

The report, an exclusive summary of which MENA published today, noted that Israel uses false pretexts and misleading ploys, which would deceive no one, to justify its continued occupation of Arab territory under security pretexts while it possesses large quantities of sophisticated U.S. arms in addition to atomic weapons. The side that should demand security is that of the Palestinian people and the Arab nation, who are still subjected to aggression.

The report pointed out that AAPSO regards with grave concern Israel's terrorist practices in the occupied territory against the Palestinian people, including the detention of thousands of innocent sons of Palestine by the harshest means of terrorism without trial and the establishment and fortification of settlements in Sinai, the Golan, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. By setting up these settlements, which are staging points for aggression against neighboring Arab territories, Israel completely ignores world public opinion and international resolutions.

The report, which martyr Yusuf as-Siba'i delivered a few hours before he was assassinated, affirmed that AAPSO declares that peace in the Middle East can only be achieved by Israel's withdrawal from all the occupied Arab territory, including Jerusalem, and by solving the Palestinian question and guaranteeing the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination and repatriation and the establishment of their independent state.

The report condemns Israel's annexation of territory by force, the establishment of Israeli settlements and their fortification and the demographic and topographic changes in the occupied Arab territory. It demands the release of all prisoners and detainees from Israeli prisons.

The 15-page report affirms the concern for resolving the Palestinian question to which martyr Yusuf as-Siba'i had devoted all his efforts and defended as an officer, writer, politician and artist since 1948, not realizing that he would be killed by Palestinian traitors who were blinded by hatred and engaged in undercover activities and plotting.

EGYPT TO SPEED UP DIGGING UNDER SUEZ CANAL

NC2412000Y Cairo MENA in Arabic 0810 GMT 24 Feb 78 NC

[Text] Ismailia, 24 February--President Anwar as-Sadat has issued instructions for the mobilization of all efforts and capabilities to dig Martyr Ahmad Hamdi Tunnel under the Suez Canal waterway at a depth of 50 meters. The president has also instructed that the timetable be compressed to complete the project. The newspaper AL-AHRAM, which reports the item, says that the (?shield) excavator is scheduled to arrive at Port Said harbor on 19 March. The excavator, which is the world's largest, was built by West Germany for the purpose of digging the tunnels of Ahmad Hamdi, Deversoir, and Al-Qantarah.

A number of German and Egyptian experts will assemble the excavator's components in mid-April. Ninety-eight percent of the excavations in the exposed parts west of the canal in the main entrance of the tunnel and 40 percent in the eastern part have been completed.

AL-BAKR RECEIVES EASTERN CHURCH PATRIARCH

JN231743Y Baghdad Voice of the Masses in Arabic 1600 GMT 23 Feb 78 JN

[Text] President Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr received in the Republican Palace today His Holiness (Mar Dankha) IV, patriarch of the Eastern Church, who is currently visiting Iraq. The president assured the patriarch that our Arab nation has showed its great characteristics and immense vitality after it became the guide of humanity on the road to peace and progress and because its land from the very beginning has been the cradle of love in its most glorious and noble form for the world religions. The president added that one of the greatest achievements of our glorious 17 July Revolution is this true brotherhood and deep compassion among the various nationalities and religions in Iraq and also the progress of Iraq in all fields.

The patriarch expressed his pleasure over his meeting with the president and expressed his gratitude to Iraq's political leadership for its continued patronage of all fraternal religious communities under the glorious 17 July Revolution.

The meeting was attended by Mr (Shlomon Mal Bako), chairman of the Administrative Committee of the Assyrian Community in Iraq.

AL-BAKR ADDRESSED WORLD FEDERATION OF DEMOCRATIC YOUTH

JN231206Y Baghdad INA in Arabic 1120 GMT 23 Feb 78 JN

[Text] Baghdad, 23 February--President Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr, deputy secretary general of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party, has called on all the nationalist and progressive forces in the world to perform their role in the field of struggle against imperialism and reaction.

This came in a message President al-Bakr addressed to the 10th conference of the WFDY currently convening in Berlin.

President al-Bakr says that the Republic of Iraq under the leadership of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party calls on all forces to stand firmly and strongly against the liquidationist and defeatist designs which are supported by U.S. imperialism and reactionary forces.

In his message, President al-Bakr expresses his appreciation of the efforts of the WFDY and its positive role in consolidating the joint struggle which the world youth are waging against imperialism and the pillars of imperialism in the world.

The message says: The convening of this conference comes at a decisive phase characterized by the ferociousness of the imperialist onslaught and escalating struggle between the forces of revolution and liberation on the one hand, and reaction, colonialism and imperialism, which are raising the slogans of reneging defeatism and capitulation on the other.

The message adds: The best example of this is what we see today in the Arab area in terms of decline and deterioration, particularly in the aftermath of the shameful and humiliating visit which As-Sadat paid to occupied Jerusalem and the negotiations that followed. The reactionary and imperialist forces and their agents have blessed these steps aimed at liquidating the Palestine issue--the central issue of our struggle--and at entrenching the aggressive Zionist usurping presence and recognizing it, as well as paving the way for the return of imperialist hegemony.

IRAQI OFFICIAL RECEIVES GDR DELEGATION 22 FEB

JN222200Y Baghdad Domestic Service in Arabic 2100 GMT 22 Feb 78 JN

[Excerpt] Na'im Haddad, secretary general of the Nationalist and Progressive Front, this evening met with the delegation of the GDR National Front led by Hasso Zimmermann, member of the front's Secretariat [name and title as heard].

During the meeting at the headquarters of the front's higher committee, the two sides discussed means to strengthen relations between the two friendly countries.

BULGARIAN COMMUNIST PARTY DELEGATION CONCLUDES VISIT

JN231046Y Baghdad INA in Arabic 1030 GMT 23 Feb 78 JN

[Text] Baghdad, 23 February--Ivan Prumov, secretary of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party, and the delegation accompanying him left Baghdad this afternoon after a 1-week official visit. In a statement Prumov expressed his pleasure at the visit and the positive results achieved by his meetings with Iraqi officials. He said that these meetings reflect the spirit of solidarity and friendship between the friendly peoples of the two countries and contribute to strengthening cooperation between Iraq and Bulgaria.

Prumov expressed his admiration for the overall progress in Iraq, particularly in the agricultural field, which is aimed at building a developed socialist countryside. He expressed his admiration for the scientific methods pursued by Iraq in the field of soil reclamation, the building of agrarian complexes and glasshouses, the establishment of huge agricultural projects and the development of animal health.

Prumov said the great development in the agricultural sector is a fruit of the struggle of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party in all domains.

The Bulgarian guest was seen off at the airport by 'Izzat Ibrahim, Revolution Command Council [RCC] member and chairman of the Higher Agricultural Council; Latif Nasif Jasim, minister of agriculture and agrarian reform; 'Abd al-Wahhab Mahmud, irrigation minister; members of the Higher Agricultural Council and the Bulgarian Embassy staff in Baghdad.

SOMALI MINISTER MEETS WITH PLANNING MINISTER

JN231708Y Baghdad Voice of the Masses in Arabic 1600 GMT 23 Feb 78 JN

[Text] 'Adnan Husayn, RCC member, planning minister and acting minister of higher education and scientific research, today conferred with Mr Omar Arteh Ghalib, member of the Central Committee of the Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party and minister of culture and higher education. The meeting dealt with the means to strengthen the relations of cooperation between the two fraternal countries.

The meeting was attended by the Somali ambassador in Baghdad.

Concludes Visit, Makes Statement

JN240954Y Baghdad INA in Arabic 0915 GMT 24 Feb 78 JN

[Text] Baghdad, 24 February--Omar Arteh Ghalib, member of the Central Committee of the Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party and minister of culture and higher education, and the delegation accompanying him left Baghdad for Turkey this morning after a 3-day visit to Iraq. In a statement before his departure, Ghalib said that during the visit his delegation held talks with Iraqi officials on bilateral issues, the current Arab situation and the means to strengthen cooperation between the two fraternal countries in the fields of higher education, arts and culture.

The Somali delegation was seen off by 'Adnan Husayn, Revolution Command Council member, planning minister and acting minister of higher education and scientific research and by the Somali ambassador in Baghdad.

HAMMADI OPENS CONFERENCE OF IRAQI CHIEFS OF MISSIONS

JN181455Y Baghdad INA in Arabic 1345 GMT 18 Feb 78 JN

[Text] Baghdad, 18 February--Foreign Minister Dr Sa'dun Hammadi opened in Baghdad today the conference of the chiefs of the Iraqi diplomatic missions in the Western countries, the socialist countries, North America and Japan. The conference will discuss the most important and pertinent international political and economic issues. The conference is the second of its kind organized by the Foreign Ministry for the Iraqi chiefs of missions in all countries.

It will be recalled that the first conference was held last month and included the chiefs of Iraqi missions in the Arab states.

The conferences are aimed at informing the Iraqi mission chiefs abroad of Iraq's stands on the political, economic, information and oil levels. They will also be informed of development plans and the achievements realized under the 17 July Revolution.

BRIEFS

SAUDI AMBASSADOR PRESENTS CREDENTIALS--Iraqi President Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr today received the credentials of Saudi Ambassador to Iraq Ahmad al-Kuhaymi. [Baghdad INA in Arabic 1100 GMT 23 Feb 78 JN]

PAPERS COMMENT ON SYRIAN-SOVIET JOINT STATEMENT

AR-RA'Y Comments

JN2409849Y Amman AR-RA'Y in Arabic 24 Feb 78 p 1 JN

[Editorial: "The Return to the Basic Concepts"]

[Excerpts] The joint Syrian-Soviet statement confirms two facts upon which international activity was based in the first quarter of last year, which ended with As-Sadat's visit to occupied Jerusalem and the direct negotiations that followed. However, these negotiations have so far led to no significant results.

The first fact is the determination to continue joint efforts to reach a just and durable peace in the Middle East--a peace based on the achievement of the basic Arab demands.

The second fact is the need to have all the concerned sides participate in the efforts aimed at achieving peace, including the PLO and the Soviet Union in its capacity as co-chairman of the Geneva conference.

Therefore, the Syrian-Soviet statement exposes the dimensions of the game which neutralized certain sides involved in the area's crisis in a clear attempt to exclude other sides, or, as former Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban put it: "Dr Kissinger has succeeded in excluding the Soviet Union and implanting differences among the Arabs. Time will resolve the rest of the problem."

Therefore, we are facing a predicament which Kissinger left for us. The Damascus-Moscow statement draws the attention of all the Arabs to the need to uphold the bases upon which the international activity was established to create a genuine peace in the area with the participation of all the sides concerned.

The continuation of the bilateral negotiations in the absence of most of the sides involved in the dispute will at best lead to the division of the one issue.

AL-AKHBAR Comments

JN2408509Y Amman AL-AKHBAR in Arabic 24 Feb 78 pp 1, 11 JN

[Editorial: "The Explosive Hotbed"]

[Excerpt] The contents of the joint Syrian-Soviet statement reveal the serious situation in the area and hint at its profound implications as well as warning that the Israeli occupation has made the area a hotbed of tension liable to explode at any moment. It is true that the Syrian Arab voice is clear in the joint statement. It is also true that the statement included several points which the Arab frontline states have crystallized in a unified Arab stand that was to have appeared in Geneva. However, it is a paradox that in less than 3 months, the situation would change and Arab division would shatter the Arab cause and make it question what raises differences on the international level at a time when the occupiers are drawing up overt plans for new conquests and for bringing in millions of new immigrants in preparation for implementing the greater Zionist plan of having an Israel extending from the Nile to the Euphrates.

The various currents moving in the area at present will undoubtedly in the final analysis collide with one single fact; namely, that Israel, despite all that has been said, will not, and is not expected, to offer Atherton any major concession and that it is submitting the question of keeping its occupation in various formulas. The only alternative is that the explosive hotbed will explode.

AR-RAFI'I: RECENT EVENTS TO PREVENT FORMATION OF NEW ARMY

JN232015Y Baghdad Domestic Service in Arabic 1600 GMT 23 Feb 78 JN

[Text] Comrade Dr 'Abd al-Majid ar-Rafi'i, member of the Ba'th Party National Command and of the Lebanese House of Deputies, has stated that Lebanon is still very far from regaining its stability, security, unity and sovereignty, and that the foreign plots to partition Lebanon as a prelude to disintegrating the whole region still exist. In a speech at a Paris symposium today, Dr ar-Rafi'i said that events show that the imperialist-Zionist plot is still active in Lebanon and that it aims at entrenching imperialist hegemony over the Arab region. Dr ar-Rafi'i pointed out that although 15 months have passed since the bloody Lebanese events came to an end, nothing basic has changed in the Lebanese internal system. The social and administrative disintegration in Lebanon, he said, is still rife and the authorities are inactive in the face of the measures taken by the illegal and well-armed rightist forces.

Dr ar-Rafi'i said that the Al-Fayyadiyah and other incidents which followed it are part of the efforts to prevent the formation of a new Lebanese National Army. These incidents are also aimed at preventing the authorities from shouldering their responsibility of reunifying Lebanon. Dr ar-Raf'i said: We are ready to negotiate on all current issues so as to reach a solution provided that the basis of such negotiations is the continuation of Lebanon as an independent Arab region.

PRIME MINISTER AL-HUSS RECEIVES SAUDI AMBASSADOR

NC231245Y Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 1130 GMT 23 Feb 78 NC

[Excerpt] At 1000 today Prime Minister Dr Salim al-Huss received the Saudi ambassador in Lebanon, Gen 'Ali ash-Sha'ir. Following the meeting, Ambassador ash-Sha'ir said: We primarily discussed economic issues. I informed Prime Minister al-Huss that Saudi Arabia has paid all Lebanon's obligations to Aramco, worth about $111 million. I learned from Prime Minister al-Huss that Aramco has in turn informed the Lebanese Government about this.

I also informed Prime Minister al-Huss that 2 days ago I handed a $9 million check to the Arab deterrent forces fund, representing the second installment of Saudi Arabia's contribution to the Arab deterrent forces' expenses.

SYRIAN FORCES CLASH WITH TRIPOLI INHABITANTS

JN231317Y Baghdad INA in Arabic 1240 GMT 23 Feb 78 JN

[Text] Beirut, 23 February--Reports received from Tripoli city in northern Lebanon say that at least eight persons were killed in bloody clashes last week between the Syrian regime's forces operating in Lebanon and the inhabitants of a densely populated quarter in the city. The reports say that the Syrian forces opened fire on the inhabitants of Bab at-Tabbanah Quarter while they were trying to protect a citizen pursued by these forces. This led to a large-scale clash which lasted for several hours. At least eight people were killed in the clash. The reports add that tension prevails in the city, despite attempts to contain the incident, in view of the vengeful operations against elements of the nationalist movement in Tripoli. The reports say in this connection that an armed group led by the so-called 'Ali 'Id, one of the stooges of the Syrian regime, has recently kidnaped four citizens and liquidated them on the pretext that they are opposing the Syrian intervention in Lebanon. The bodies of the four citizens were found in the gardens of the city.

AL-ASAD RETURNS, MAKES STATEMENT ON SOVIET TV

JN231304Y Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1215 GMT 23 Feb 78 JN

[Text] President Hafiz al-Asad returned to Damascus at 1330 today after his official and friendly 4-day visit to the Soviet Union. During the visit Al-Asad held intensified talks with the Soviet leaders on bilateral relations and means of strengthening them, the Middle East and international issues of concern to the Syrian Arab Republic and the Soviet Union. The party and government delegation accompanying President al-Asad on his visit returned with him.

CPSU General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev arrived at the Kremlin at 1000 today, Moscow time, 0900 Damascus time, to say goodby to President al-Asad. Brezhnev accompanied Al-Asad to the airport, where an official sendoff was accorded to President al-Asad. Taking part in the sendoff were Chairman of the Soviet Council of Ministers Kosygin, Defense Minister Marshal Ustinov, senior party and government officials, Syrian Ambassador in Moscow Jabr al-Kafri, the Syrian Embassy staff, Soviet Ambassador in Damascus Chernyakov, heads of Arab diplomatic missions in Moscow and throngs of Arab students and Moscow residents.

After playing the national anthems of the two countries, the guards of honor saluted Al-Asad. Al-Asad then shook hands with the senior officials at the stairs to the plane. Soviet television relayed live the ceremony of Al-Asad's departure via the Intervision network, which covers the Soviet Union and the socialist countries.

President al-Asad sent a cable to Leonid Brezhnev from the plane. The text of the cable follows:

At the end of our visit to the Soviet Union I would like to express to you and to your comrades in the CPSU Central Committee, in my name and on behalf of the Syrian Arab delegation, (?warm thanks) for the hospitality and welcome accorded us. We are returning to the homeland with your kind regards to the Syrian Arab people. We are satisfied with the talks we held during the visit. We also appreciate the firm and continued Soviet support to the just Arab struggle. Undoubtedly this visit and its results will further strengthen the relations of friendship and cooperation between Syria and the Soviet Union in all fields. I wish you good health and happiness and the Soviet peoples further success and progress. 23 February 1978

Agreement was reached on the text of the joint statement on President al-Asad's visit to the Soviet Union. The statement will be broadcast at 2030 today from Damascus and Moscow.

Before his departure President al-Asad gave a statement to Soviet television. He said: During this vist we met with Comrade Leonid Brezhnev and the Soviet leaders. We held talks on several subjects. Among the subjects we discussed were relations between the two countries. Al-Asad said: We agreed on the need to strengthen these relations in various fields. Committees from the two countries will meet shortly to discuss issues that affirm this course of cooperation between the two countries. We also discussed the situation in the Middle East. Our views were in agreement.

Al-Asad further said: On this occasion I extend my thanks to Comrade Brezhnev and the Soviet leadership and people for their continued principled stand supporting the just struggle of the Arab nation to liberate the occupied Arab land and to restore the rights of the Palestinian Arab people.

Al-Asad said: Generally speaking, I want to say that our meetings have been successful, useful and fruitful. This has happened in every meeting between us and the Soviet leadership. Al-Asad said: I was pleased that our meetings took place at a time in which the Soviet Union and the Soviet Armed Forces were celebrating the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the Soviet Army and Soviet Navy. I was also pleased at sharing with the Soviet leadership and armed forces and the masses of the Soviet people their ceremonies on this occasion. In my name and on behalf of the Syrian Arab delegation and people, I greet them and wish them further progress and prosperity.

Joint Statement Issued

For a Damascus Domestic Service account of the text of the joint Soviet-Syrian statement issued following the Moscow visit of Syrian President al-Asad, see the Middle East & North Africa section of the 24 February Soviet Union DAILY REPORT.

TISHRIN Praises Visit

JN240626Y Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 0430 GMT 24 Feb 78 JN

[From the press review]

[Text] Under the headline "Some of What Historic Leadership Can Achieve," the newspaper TISHRIN writes: A quick look at the joint Syrian-Soviet statement issued on leader Al-Asad's visit to the Soviet Union clearly shows the role of Hafiz al-Asad's leadership and his progressive principled political stands in promoting the stands of friends toward our fateful issues. The more mature and comprehensive a political stand is and the firmer its insistence on adhering to the principles of pan-Arab issues, the more it can rally the progressive forces in the world around it. Thus, these forces become more convinced of our just stand and genuine struggle, and consequently they will more consistently back our struggle.

TISHRIN says: The Soviet Union's commitment to continue to raise Syria's defensive capability to confront the ferocious imperialist-Zionist onrush against the Arab struggle and liberation movement and the Soviet emphasis on the important role Syria is playing to strengthen the Arab front of steadfastness are clear indications that Syria's political stand demonstrates the conscience of our nation. This stand is an expression of Syria's rejection of hostile schemes concocted to stab at this nation and the liberated future of its masses. In confronting imperialist defiance, the plot aimed against the entire Arab struggle and the liquidation of the rights of the Palestinian people, Syria is defending not only its nationalist issues but also all our nation.

TISHRIN continues: In making its big decisions, Syria represents the whole weight of the Arab nation. All dealings with Hafiz al-Asad must take place within this specific pan-Arab framework. This is the same framework within which Hafiz al-Asad makes his big decisions. This is what gives Hafiz al-Asad's decisions their historic importance. With its big results, Al-Asad's visit is a proof of the capability of the historic leader of influencing events and directing them in the interests of his people and nation. This is some of what leader Al-Asad's visit to the Soviet Union has achieved.

Nuclear Arms Reportedly Requested

NC2313117 Doha QNA in Arabic 1213 GMT 23 Feb 78 NC

[Text] Kuwait, 23 February--Quoting diplomatic sources, the Kuwaiti newspaper AS-SIYASAH reports today that Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad asked the Soviet leaders during their discussions in Moscow to supply Syria with second-grade Soviet nuclear weapons but that the Soviet Union promised to give Syria MIG-25 planes. The paper says that if the Soviets fulfill their promise, these planes will bring about a military balance with Israel and perhaps strategic superiority, which makes any Israeli thinking of waging a new war a most dangerous matter. The paper adds that it appears that the Syrian president actually wanted to obtain these planes.

AL-BA'TH: ATHERTON'S MISSION DOOMED TO FAILURE

JN220659Y Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 0530 GMT 22 Feb 78 JN

[From the Press Review]

[Text] Under the headline "Atherton's Mission is Doomed to Failure," the newspaper AL-BA'TH writes: U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Alfred Atherton the day before yesterday, Monday, began a new stage in his shuttle between Tel Aviv and Cairo to carry out the mission entrusted to him, that is, to guarantee the continuation of negotiations between As-Sadat's regime and Israel.

On arrival at Lod airport in occupied Palestine. Atherton stressed the importance the Washington government attaches to the continuation of negotiations. He pointed out that Washington's aim was and is to broaden the current negotiations in order to establish peace in the Middle East based on U.S. views. The paper says that this new statement by Atherton again discloses the role the United States is playing in the Middle East. The United States is trying to force the Arabs to pursue the same course As-Sadat is following. This is a course of defeat, kneeling and capitulation to Israel. This course also means the final liquidation of the Palestine issue and the recognition of Israel on the basis of the fait accompli, as As-Sadat has done.

The paper futher says: The United States is mistaken if it believes that through pressure or threats it can carry out this scheme and force the Arabs to kneel before their first enemy, Israel. The United States will even be more mistaken if it tries to turn the countries of the front of steadfastness and confrontation away from their declared line, or to force them to accept the Zionist-U.S. concept of peace in the area.

Concluding, the paper says: The countries of steadfastness and confrontation announced that a just peace in the Middle East is based on complete withdrawal from all occupied Arab territory and the guaranteeing of the rights of the Palestinian Arab people. Thus, these countries are adopting the concept of peace which all the Arab people want. This peace embodies pan-Arab aspirations. No force, no matter how great, can make our people, represented in the front of steadfastness and confrontation, relinquish their rights and aims.

TISHRIN ASSAILS U.S. DEFENSE SECRETARY'S STATEMENTS

JN230937 Damascus SANA in Arabic 0835 GMT 23 Feb 78 JN

[Text] Damascus, 23 February--In its column "Behind the News" and under the headline "The Security of Oil Profits and Security of the United States," today's issue of TISHRIN denounces the statements of U.S. Defense Secretary Harold Brown on the impossibility of separating the security of the Middle East and the gulf from the security of the United States and that of NATO. The paper says that this U.S. escalation is an attempt at blatant political blackmail and pressure on the forces that reject foreign influence. It is also a premature announcemnt of the return of the U.S. umbrella to the Middle East and its extension to the gulf states.

TISHRIN says that the new U.S. statements are very closely connected with the new situation in the area that has arisen as a result of the As-Sadat regime's capitulation and its transformation into a party in the tripartite conspiracy against the Arabs who are hostile to imperialism, against the Palestine question and against the establishment of the Arab steadfastness front, whose foremost members are Syria and the PLO.

TISHRIN says that if the U.S. secretary of defense links the security of the area with that of his country, the security of the area is first and foremost the security of the peoples of the area, independence, sovereignty, rights and safety. These peoples reject foreign domination and the spheres of influence. These people consider their national resources their own property and a weapon to serve their struggle.

Concluding its commentary, TISHRIN says that the Arab masses which are rallying around Syria and the front of steadfastness in the battle for a just and permanent peace and against the plot to impoise capitulation on Arabs are concerned about their security and determined to restore their occupied land and usurped rights. Any situation that does not insure achievement of these conditions will not be secure, whether or not the United States links it with its national security.

ATH-THAWRAH HITS AS-SADAT REMARKS ON PALESTINIANS

JN240709Y Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 0430 GMT 24 Feb 78 JN

[From the press review]

[Text] The newspaper ATH-THAWRAH writes a commentary on As-Sadat's latest statements. It says: As-Sadat described the Palestinian people as terrorists and hirelings exactly as Yizhaq Rabin, Begin, Dayan and other Israelis have done. When the Israelis express their hatred of and grudge against the Palestinian people their aim is well known. They do not want to hear one single Palestinian uttering the name of Palestine. They also want to erase from history the Palestinian people and all their past, present and future significance.

What is the aim of As-Sadat when he deals with the Palestinian people as Israel deals with them? ATH-THAWRAH says: As-Sadat's vituperations make the Arab masses and the world view him as an Israeli settler with an Arab identity. If As-Sadat's trial for his visit to Israel is a pan-Arab duty, withdrawal of recognition of his Arabism and of his capacity as an Arab president is also one of the requirements of pan-Arab duty. This is because he has stabbed at the Palestinian people's struggle and sacrifices. As-Sadat's regime is trying by all means to incite the Egyptian people and to antagonize them against the Arabs.

As soon as As-Sadat began to level his insults at the Arab masses, he became another Begin and another Dayan in the eyes of these masses. Let him curse as he likes. Rulers have often fallen quickly because of their insults to peoples.

TALAS SPEAKS TO STUDENTS ON MIDEAST SITUATION

JN231422Y Damascus SANA in Arabic 1330 GMT 23 Feb 78 JN

[Excerpts] Damascus, 23 February--Gen Mustafa Talas, deputy commander in chief of the army and the armed forces and defense minister, yesterday met with the leaders of the National Federation of Syrian Students.

During the meeting Talas talked about the political and military situation in the Arab region as well as Syria's tasks at this stage and its steadfastness in the face of the imperialist-Zionist conspiracy which is being implemented with the help of Anwar as-Sadat, president of the Egyptian regime. Talas stressed that our people will take the traitors and conspirators task, giving them no chance to play with the issues of our Arab nation.

He then talked about the situation in fraternal Lebanon and said: Some traitors wanted to implement the plans of the enemies of the Arab nation and Lebanon, but our armed forces working within the Arab deterrent force took action against them in time. These forces will continue to preserve the security and dignity of Lebanon. Our army--the army of the Arab nation--will continue to defend the honor and dignity of the Arab nation, confront its enemies and struggle for the liberation of its usurped territories.

Talas went on to say: We will continue the struggle under comrade struggler Hafiz al-Asad, who will definitely lead us to victory. We will exert all our efforts so that we may achieve the aims of our march, liberate our usurped territories and restore the legitimate rights of the Palestinian Arab people.

RALLY HELD ON EGYPTIAN-SYRIAN UNITY ANNIVERSARY

JN222131Y Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1915 GMT 22 Feb 78 JN

[Excerpts] Damascus--The Damascus branch command of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party held a speech rally this evening at the building of the General Federation of the Syrian Trade Unions on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the declaration of unity between Egypt and Syria and the 12th anniversary of the 23 February movement.

The rally was attended by Comrade 'Abdallah al-Ahmar, assistant secretary general of the Ba'th Party; Comrade Muhammad Jabir Bajbuu, assistant regional secretary; members of the National and Regional commands; members of the Central Command of the Progressive Nationalist Front; ministers; heads of popular organizations; the secretary and members of the commands of Damascus and Damascus University; members of the Al-Qunaytirah and Palestinian branches of the party; and a large number of citizens. The rally began with a minute of silence in honor of the martyrs of the Arab nation.

Speaking on behalf of the Ba'th Party, Comrade Sami 'Attari, Ba'th National Command member, praised the anniversary of the two occasions. He stressed that Arab unity is the principal objective for which the Ba'th Party was founded. He added that unity is and will continue to be the main objective of the Ba'th Party--the objective which embraces its progressive and humanitarian dimensions by its organic link with the objectives of freedom and socialism.

Comrade 'Attari said that the unity between the two Arab states--Egypt and Syria--in 1958 was the revolutionary result of the struggle of our party and masses in Syria and the uniting of this struggle with the 23 Revolution in Egypt, led by the great Arab leader Jamal 'Abd an-Nasir.

Comrade 'Attari added: It is incumbent upon us today to recall the lessons of the experiment of unity and secession and the experiment of the revolution and corrective movement. This is because today we need more than ever to unify the resources and efforts of struggle to confront the serious consequences resulting from As-Sadat's deviation, treason and plotting and the vicious imperialist onslaught which is exploiting this deviation, treason and plotting in its persistent attempts to strike against the sites of Arab liberation forces, liquidate the Palestinian cause and impose multifaceted imperialist-Zionist domination over the entire Arab homeland.

DAMASCUS REPORTS ON EGYPTIAN POLITICAL DETAINEES

JN232031Y Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1915 GMT 23 Feb 78 JN

[Text] The political detainees in As-Sadat's prisons have appealed to the world democratic and nationalist forces to defend them. A statement distributed in Paris points out that the detainees are being exposed to ugly and inhuman treatment in Liman Turrah prison with the aim of transforming these detainees into helpless human beings. The statement adds that the freedom of opinion and conscience in Egypt is being seriously endangered because the As-Sadat authorities have referred the detainees to military tribunals. Cairo reports indicate that poet Ahmad Fu'ad Nazim and his wife and artist Shaykh Imam will be referred to military tribunals for complicity in inciting a revolution.

KUWAITI PAPER: SYRIA HINTS AT JOINING WARSAW PACT

NC221030Y Doha QNA in Arabic 0950 GMT 22 Feb 78 NC

[Text] Kuwait, 22 February--The Kuwaiti newspaper AR-RA'Y AL-'AMM today quotes a senior Syrian official as saying that Syria will not submit but will resist and fight and will not allow Israel to move freely in our land or airspace, even if circumstances force Syria to join the Warsaw Pact.

Quoting the same official, the paper says that the strength of the Syrian stance stems from the power of the Arab stand and that Syria will eventually reach the stage of military balance with the Israeli enemy. The Syrian official affirmed that his country refuses to receive Egyptian President Anwar as-Sadat in Damascus or anywhere else because there is nothing more to be discussed.

SYRIAN, PLO DELEGATIONS TO AAPSO MEETINGS RETURN

JN222157Y Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 2115 GMT 22 Feb 78 JN

[Excerpt] The Syrian delegation to the AAPSO conference led by Dr Mustafa Haddad, president of Damascus University, has returned to Damascus from Cyprus aboard a private plane. The PLO delegation led by 'Abd al-Muhsin Abu Mayzar, PLO official spokesman, also returned aboard the same plane.

LIBYA

TRIPOLI TALKS REACH AGREEMENT ON CHAD SITUATION

LD232232Y Tripoli Voice of the Arab Homeland in Arabic 2115 GMT 23 Feb 78 LD

[Excerpts] Today's closed session of the quadripartite talks, which was held at the People's Hall at Sabha, ended at 2100. The session was attended by heads of states participating in the talks which began at 1700 today. Members of the official delegations of the Jamahiriyah, Niger, Chad and Sudan participated in the session.

The official spokesman of the conference, brother Muhammad Abu al-Qasim az-Zuwayy, secretary for information and culture, held a press conference at the end of the closed session. He declared that the heads of state held a closed meeting lasting about 2 hours in a constructive, cordial atmosphere. During the meeting, the following was agreed:

1. The four countries meeting at Sabha have agreed not to permit any other side to talk about matters pertaining to the internal situation in Chad and to help the Chadian brothers to solve their problems. In other words, no party other than the countries meeting at Sabha will have the right to intervene or discuss this subject.

2. The heads of states have agreed to prepare a draft provisional agreement for the holding of a meeting between the rebels and the Chad Government at Sabha under the supervision of Sudan and the Jamahiriyah. The agreement is being drafted. The agreement will provide details of matters pertaining to the meeting.

3. It was agreed that the Jamahiriyah ambassador will return to Ndjamena and that the decision to freeze political relations between the two countries will be canceled.

Brother Colonel al-Qadhdhafi has made a statement. He said: We are meeting here to solve an internal problem in a sisterly state, Chad. We in the Jamahiriyah, Niger and Sudan are neighbors of Chad. We are meeting to solve an internal problem and this proves that Africa is truly for the Africans and that the Africans are able to solve their own problems.

This meeting frustrates the hopes of those who want to spark the fire of war in Africa particularly in the underdeveloped African countries which need peace and stability.

AL-QADHDHAFI RECEIVES AFRICAN FOREIGN MINISTERS

LD231618Y Tripoli JANA in English 1502 GMT 23 Feb 78 LD

[Text] Tripoli, February 23, JANA--Col Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, the leader of the revolution received here yesterday separately the foreign ministers of Somalia, Ethiopia, Zambia, Kenya, Ghana and Togo. The secretary of liaison was present.

AT-TURAYKI RECEIVES FRENCH OFFICIALS 22 FEBRUARY

LD231620Y Tripoli JANA in English 1507 GMT 23 Feb 78 LD

[Text] Tripoli, February 23, JANA--Dr. 'Ali at-Turayki, the Jamahiriyah foreign secretary, received here yesterday the secretary general of the French Presidential Office and the director of African Affairs at the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

DAYAN COMMENTS ON PEACE NEGOTIATION ISSUES

Possibility of Jordanian Role

TA230920Y Tel Aviv HA'AREZ in Hebrew 23 Feb 78 pp 1,2 TA

[By HA'AREZ political correspondent]

[Text] Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan said yesterday to the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Security Committee that he can see no chance of Jordan's joining the negotiations.

Dayan said that Husayn is not prepared to make any compromise to Israel and he is demanding a total Israeli withdrawl, including a withdrawal from East Jerusalem. Dayan added that the prime minister was willing to discuss a Jordanian proposal for territorial compromise but no such proposal has been forthcoming. Dayan said that if we get one, we will not reject it outright. He added that the efforts to be made by Alfred Atherton toward formulating an Israeli-Egyptian declaration of principles might not be acceptable to Jordan. As-Sadat is unwilling to reach a separate peace settlement with Israel.

Discussing the settlement issue, Dayan said that the existing settlements in the Rafah approaches should be strengthened (thus implying that new settlements should not be added), while the agreed settlement plan for Judaea and Samaria should be implemented (which includes the establishment of two more settlements in the framework of military camps).

Dayan pointed out that in his talks in Washington it was not the settlement issue which was central in the deliberations but As-Sadat's conditions for the renewal of the negotiations. The Egyptian president's positions are tough, said the foreign minister.

The foreign minister was also asked on the intervention by the Israeli Embassy in Washington in the plans of Jewish leaders to meet with As-Sadat. Dayan told the members of the committee that there had not been any intervention initiated by the Israeli Embassy. When asked, it had merely expressed its opinion against helping As-Sadat in his efforts to split the Jewish leadership with respect to Israel..

Pessimistic on Prospects

TA232019Y Jerusalem Domestic Television Service in Hebrew 1900 GMT 23 Feb 78 TA

[Text] Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan expressed a pessimistic evaluation today about the chances for progress in the negotiations with Egypt. The foreign minister made statements to that effect in Jerusalem this morning. According to him it appears that at this stage the prospects are scanty that there will be agreement on an Israeli-Egyptian declaration of intention and on bringing Jordan to the negotiating table. Our political correspondent, Elimelekh Ram, reports:

Those who took part this morning in a conversation with the foreign minister did not leave encouraged. It was a report, they say, which did not leave much ground for optimism but, on the other hand, it was not a pessimistic report. The foreign minister's assessment was realistic.

The prime minister's scheduled visit in Washington, Moshe Dayan says, is meant, from the U.S. viewpoint, to maintain the continuity of the negotiations at any cost, but one should not imbue it with too many hopes. A move by As-Sadat is clearly taking shape now, in which he is no longer ready to make do with a joint declaration of intentions.

As-Sadat wants to see Jordan as an active partner in the negotiations. This cannot be achieved--according to what the current situation appears to be--by a declaration of intentions in the spirit of President Carter's Aswan formula, in which mention is made of Security Council Resolution 242 about a withdrawal from territories and the cooperation of Palestinians in determining their future. Husayn demands a withdrawl to the 1967 lines in all sectors, and the establishment of a Palestinian state, a state which is absolutely unacceptable to Israel. The foreign minister said that the chief topic in the talks between the prime minister, the defense minister, the foreign minister and the U.S. administration will concentrate on the attempt to bring King Husayn to the negotiating table, but no way of doing this seems to be in sight at the moment.

Dayan reiterated and stressed that the settlements are not the main stumbling block in the negotiations. This view is also held by the Americans.

The foreign minister described as speculation he did not even wish to refer to the report of a U.S. intention to establish a military base in the Sinai, to serve as a buffer between Israel and Egypt. Tomorrow afternoon the foreign minister is to meet with Assistant Secretary of State Alfred Atherton, who is to deliver Egypt's reaction to Israel's proposal about the formulation of the declaration of intentions. Moshe Dayan estimates that no change is expected after tomorrow's meeting. The question is whether any change can be expected in the foreseeable future.

MINISTER SHARON DISCUSSES SETTLEMENTS ISSUE

Integral to Peace

TA232111Y Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 2100 GMT 23 Feb 78 TA

[Text] Agriculture Minister Ari'el Sharon said this evening at the Zionist congress in Jerusalem that settlements play a central role in Israel's peace plan. There can be no secure life in Israel without settlements. To insure security for Netanya, Shomron and Elon more are needed. In the Rafah approaches, Ari'el Sharon said, Israel insists on a strip of settlements, so that there should be at least one guaranteed demilitarized zone.

Our correspondent, Shim'on Schiffer, notes that Ari'el Sharon's statements were interrupted throughout by boos and whistling on the one hand, and by applause on the other.

Importance of Settlements

TA240923Y Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 0900 GMT 24 Feb 78 TA

[Text] Agriculture Minister Ari'el Sharon believes that the settlements in the Yamit district are essential, because, among other things, thousands of Bedouin from Sinai are already concentrating [word indistinct] to. In the deliberations of the Zionist congress settlement committee Sharon said that there is a constant struggle between Jewish settlement and the Arabs who are trying to infiltrate into areas within Israel. There are over 10,000 Bedouin from Sinai and the Negev in the area between Ashqelon and Hadera and there are West Bank Arabs living on state land. Jewish settlement is in a state of regression while Arab settlement is advancing, Sharon said.

ISRAEL REPORTEDLY OFFERED AID AGAINST LARNACA TERRORISTS

TA231435Y Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1300 GMT 23 Feb 78 TA

[Text] It has been reported from Nicosia that last Saturday Israel offered to help the Cypriot authorities to overcome the two Palestinian terrorists after they had murdered the Egyptian politican Yusuf as-Siba'i. An authoritative source in Nicosia made these remarks to an AFP correspondent and stressed that the Nicosia government had strongly rejected the proposal. The source pointed out that the offer was made on Saturday by the Israeli Embassy in Cyprus.

Foreign Ministry Denies Report

TA231436Y Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1400 GMT 23 Feb 78 TA

[Text] "A totally unfounded report" is how the Foreign Ministry spokesman described the report from Nicosia alleging that Israel had offered the Cyprus authorities its assistance last Saturday in overpowering the two Palestinians who murdered the Egyptian statesman, Yusuf as-Siba'i. The report was issued by an authoritative source in Nicosia to an AFP correspondent. He emphasized that the government of Cyprus strongly rejected the proposal.

CORRESPONDENT REPORTS ON LARNACA AIRPORT EVENTS

TA231501Y Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 23 Feb pp 1, 2 TA

[By MA'ARIV Nicosia correspondent Alekos Konstandinidhis]

[Text] It was a PLO terrorist unit at Larnaca airport that opened fire on the charging Egyptian soldiers, according to eyewitnesses present at the airport during the fighting on Sunday night. The PLO members arrived in Larnaca armed but dressed in civilian clothing. According to testimony, there is no longer any doubt that the Cypriot authorities knew about their presence.

After the Palestinians opened fire on the Egyptian commandos and the Egyptians returned fire, members of the Cypriot National Guard joined in the fighting. This created a crossfire on the field which caused the terrible mix-up that characterized the whole of the battle.

The Greek authorities in Cyprus are maintaining total silence about the affair. It appears that the latest development, including Cairo's announcement that it was breaking diplomatic relations with Nicosia, has caused leaders a lot of embarrassment. While official spokesmen are refusing to comment on any issue and are even denying the most well-known reports, the deputy commander of the Cypriot police, Pavlos Stokos, has been fired. The government suspected him of having leaked reports about what happened at Larnaca and about the activities of Yusuf as-Siba'i's murders--facts which the government was not interested in having revealed.

The central role played by the PLO office in Nicosia in the murder has now come to light. When the two murderers arrived at the Hilton Hotel in Nicosia on Thursday of last week, unknown people had already booked a room for them on the same floor where As-Siba'i was staying. They got the rooms in the names written in their passports. After they put their suitcases in their rooms, one of them went to the PLO office in Nicosia, which had opened only 15 days earlier, at 15 Zaltos Street.

A Cypriot policeman--a policeman is permanently placed outside the PLO office--told his friends that on that Thursday one of the terrorists (he confirmed the identification only after the pictures of the two murderers were made public) came and asked to see "Mr Williams." Informed sources in Nicosia identified this man as a senior PLO intelligence officer using this name. "Mr Williams" received the man immediately.

All signs indicate that the two murderers felt totally confident. There is no doubt that this confidence arose as a result of the manner in which the authorities allowed the representatives of the terrorist organization freedom of activity. These bold ties, together with Dr Lissaridhis' mediation on behalf of the terrorists with President Kiprianou, were a direct factor in the Cypriot president's willingness to release the two murderers after returning the hostages that they had kidnaped.

A reliable source reported yesterday that an hour after the two murderers had appeared before a magistrate in Nicosia--who decided to detain them until the trial next Monday--Dr Lissaridhis visited the two in prison. He spent 20 minutes with them and observers believe that he tried to explain what had happened between the time he had made his promise and the time they were arrested--events that disrupted the original plan to grant them Cypriot passports and allow their armed friends to remove immediately them from the country.

The break in relations between Cairo and Nicosia has also created economic problems. Thousands of Cypriot's work in Saudi Arabia and there are fears now that they will be expelled.

JERUSALEM POST SAYS PLO 'REGULARS' FOUGHT AT LARNACA

TA240634Y Jerusalem POST in English 24 Feb 78 p 1 TA

[By military correspondent Hirsh Goodman]

[Text] Sixteen PLO terrorists took part in the attack against Egyptian commandos in Larnaca on Saturday night, sources confirmed to the Jerusalem POST yesterday.

According to Western intelligence sources, the 16 were flown into Cyprus from Beirut with the prior consent of the Government of Cyprus in order to provide a security belt for the two Palestinian hijackers who had been granted free passage out of Larnaca by the Cypriots in return for releasing the plane, its crew and the hostages they had taken earlier.

All 16 were regular members of the Palestine Liberation Organization and not a special commando force, as published in various papers to date. They arrived in Cyprus armed and were charged only with providing an escort for the two hijackers, whom the PLO apparently feared would be prevented from leaving Cyprus by "hostile forces" on the island.

It was this special group of PLO regulars who took the major role in the battle against the Egyptian troops, shooting the attackers in the back from positions at the main terminal.

The confirmation of the participation of PLO regulars in the fighting explodes the PLO's earlier protestations that it had nothing to do with the hijacking, and makes a mockery of Yasir 'Arafat's personal assurances and expressions of regret at the incident.

CHANGE OF PERSONNEL IN MILITARY COMMITTEE REPORTED

TA232043Y Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1900 GMT 23 Feb 78 TA

[Text] A change of personnel took place today in the small military delegation in Cairo, which is part of the Israeli team in the Joint Military Committee. Col Eli'ezer Rimon, of the General Staff Planning Division, accompanied by several team members, returned from Cairo this evening aboard an Israeli Air Force Plane. He told an ITIM correspondent that there is no specific reason for his return. As an army man, he said, I have nothing to communicate on the prospect of a renewal of the talks in the joint committee.

This morning, Col Ya'aqov Heykhal, also from the Planning Division, left for Cairo, to replace Colonel Rimon.

JOURNAL COMMENTS ON BREAK IN RELATIONS WITH KENYA

LD2314047 Teheran PARS in English 1109 GMT 23 Feb 78 LD

[Text] Teheran, 22 Feb, PANA (PARS NEWS AGENCY)--In an editorial on Wednesday, February 22, the English language morning newspaper Teheran JOURNAL commented on the following article by saying that...

A pane has shattered in Iran's "window on Africa" policy with the recent decision to break off diplomatic relations with Kenya. But the severance of ties, while unfortunate, is not without justification. Iran was forced into a position where the longer Ambassador Ahmad Tavakoli remained at his post in Nairobi, the more tarnished diplomatic pride would become and this nation would be seen as accepting unjustified criticism without taking appropriate action. That action came on Saturday when Foreign Minister Abas Ali Khalatbari announced that diplomatic ties with Kenya had been stretched beyond their limits and Iran had decided on the final cut. He described the move as provoked by "unwarranted" criticism of Iran's support for Somalia in its dispute with Ethiopia. The Kenyan press had been attacking Iran for some time, erroneously alleging Iranian involvement in the Ogaden war.

Iran has declared its desire to bring about a peaceful settlement in the Ogaden conflicts and has not taken any measures against Ethiopia. Iranian aid to the Somalis has consisted merely of medical supplies delivered by the Red Lion and Sun Society.

Yet this is a natural concomitant of Iran's commitment to the inviolability of internationally recognized borders everywhere, as a member state of the United Nations. As well, Iran is understandably concerned with the fate of Somalia as a predominantly Moslem nation and member of the Islamic brotherhood. It is also natural for Iran to worry at the prospect of unsettled conditions in the Horn of Africa and the possibility of a hostile controlling influence disrupting sea routes for Iranian oil transported to Europe and the United States.

Inevitable though the diplomatic rift was between Iran and Kenya in view of the continued press and finally official accusations, it is nevertheless not welcome. Iran will not lose a great deal as diplomatic contact was simply part of general policy to open a window on Africa and expand cooperation with Third World countries. Trade relations were one-sided, with Iranian oil mostly reaching Nairobi via the oil consortium. The Moslem minority in Kenya, including some 28,000 Arabs, will be unhappy, and the Kenyan economy is not so healthy that the government of President Jomo Kenyatta can afford to alienate potential sources of aid or trade. On reflection, Kenyan authorities may well wish they had not been so hearty or heavy-handed. But it is now up to this African state to make any moves toward rapprochement with Iran. And that is unlikely until a peaceful settlement is achieved in the Ogaden.

BANGLADESH

GOVERNMENT SANCTIONS NEW POLITICAL PARTY

BK221245Y Dacca Domestic Service in English 0835 GMT 22 Feb 78 BK

[Text] The government has given its approval to the Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Ganatantrik Dal [Nationalist Democratic Party] to function as a political party. The approval for the new party under the Political Parties Regulation of 1976 was communicated to the chairman of the Dacca Paura Sabha [municipality], Mr Abdul Hasnat, by the Ministry of Law and Parliamentary Affairs. Mr Abdul submitted a proposal on behalf of the Jatiyatabadi Ganatantrik Dal on the 7th of this month.

ANANDA BAZAR PATRIKA REPORTS ON ZIA, ELECTIONS

BK231715Y Calcutta ANANDA BAZAR PATRIKA in Bengali 18 Feb 78 p 1 BK

[By Sukharanjan Das Gupta]

[Excerpts] The Bangladesh general election will be held next December. This was stated by Bangladesh President Maj Gen Ziaur Rahman at Dacca airport after his return Friday night [17 February] from the Commonwealth heads of government conference in Sydney. Earlier on the same day, he made a similar statement during his stopover in Singapore.

In his statement Ziaur said that only those 19 political parties which have been approved by the government will be able to take part in the election. He refused to comment on banned political parties such as the Bangladesh Communist Party, the Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal [National Socialist Party], the Democratic League of former President Khandakar Mushtaque and two other parties.

It should be mentioned that only a few days ago Ziaur Rahman suggested the introduction of a presidential form of government in Bangladesh instead of a parliamentary democracy. But at that time he did not clearly state when the election of a president would take place. He only said that it takes time to make arrangements for general elections and to amend the voters list.

The Awami League, the principal political party of Bangladesh, is demanding on behalf of various political parties that elections be held in March, but Ziaur favors December.

Ziaur has indicated that prior to the holding of an election, "martial law" will be withdrawn in phases, in order that a normal atmosphere congenial to an election can be established. In the meantime, he wants to organize his own party--the National Democratic Party--so that it can secure a majority in the election.

Meanwhile, a number of leaders of the banned party led by Khandakar Mushtaque Ahmed have joined Ziaur's newly-constituted party. Ziaur is also considering releasing detained political leaders against whom no definite charges have been registered.

The Awami League is calling a party meeting in March in Dacca to decide whether or not it will take part in the election. It has stipulated certain conditions in this regard, such as accepting Mujib as the father of the nation and the holding of an inquiry into the murder in jail of the four leaders [Nazrul Islam, Kamruzzaman, Mansur Ali and Tajuddin Ahmed].

INDIA

DELHI RADIO INTERVIEWS VIETNAMESE PRIME MINISTER

BK231733Y Delhi Domestic Service in English 1545 GMT 23 Feb 78 BK

[Interview with SRV Premier Pham Van Dong by All-India Radio Southeast Asia correspondent Amrit Mehta; date not given--recorded--Pham Van Dong's answers in Vietnamese fading into English translation]

[Text] [Question] Mr Prime Minister, on the eve of your visit to India, would you like to comment on the state of relations between the two countries?

[Answer] Today I am happy to have an opportunity to talk to the great Indian people, a great friend, a brother of the Vietnamese people. I am pleased to speak to men, women and all other people--children as well as India's scientists in research institutes, workers in factories, peasants in the fields and students in universities. To all of you I am happy to convey our message of gratitude and warmest greetings.

As you know, I will soon have the honor to visit your beautiful and glorious country, [words indistinct] the land of outstanding achievements in agriculture, industry, science and technology, the land of Mahatama Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, of very hard-working, intelligent and talented people who accomplished great works and who are surely to accomplish even greater ones.

[Question] What are the existing areas of cooperation between the two countries, and during your visit will you be suggesting any new areas to which our two countries can cooperate fruitfully?

[Answer] My visit is a (?miracle) song to the age-old pure, profound and persistent friendship between our two peoples. This friendship originates from mutual understanding and respect, from mutual support in the protracted and hard struggle for the independence of our respective countries.

Today, we find this expression in our multiform cooperation in the economic and cultural, scientific and technological fields for the prosperity of our respective countries. There are people's sentiments equally [as heard] in our cooperation in international activity, in the nonalined movement and in other international forums for peace, friendship and cooperation between the people in this region and in the world.

[Question] Your country, Mr Prime Minister, has fulfilled the late President Ho Chi Minh's most cherished desire of reunification. What are the major problems that Vietnam is facing in the tremendous task of reconstructing its own wartorn economy?

[Answer] Right after our complete victory, the Vietnamese people set out to heal the wounds of war, rehabilitate and develop the economy, develop culture and gradually improve their living standards. For this purpose we are determined to mobilize all available national forces and resources. Utilizing [words indistinct] all for victory, it is now all for production, all for the people's welfare.

Our immediate target is to build up a new life; though at present it is not materially very high, it is spiritually happy, sound and fine. We will turn our country into a modern industrial, agricultural one. We have developed culture and advanced (?sciences). To carry out this task, we have very fundamental advantages. Our people are hard-working, intelligent and resourceful. Our country's natural resources are abundant and diversified. Our fine system insures the working people the right to be masters, and the line of our party--the Communist Party of Vietnam--is a correct and clear-sighted one.

To carry this out, we will rely mainly on our resources, while making every effort to secure cooperation from brotherly and friendly countries around the world. Among them are the brotherly Indian people.

We are firmly confident of success in building a peaceful, unified, independent and socialist Vietnam, a rich, beautiful and civilized Vietnam, in the interest of our people and also in fulfillment of our international duty to the cause of peace, national independence, democracy and social progress in the world [words indistinct].

We shall meet again in the next few days, which will be nice and inspiring.

Arrives on Official Visit

BK240748Y Delhi Domestic Service in English 0730 GMT 24 Feb 78 BK

[Text] The Vietnamese prime minister, Mr Pham Van Dong, was given a warm welcome on arrival in New Delhi today on a 7-day official visit to India. The first to greet the dignatary as he alighted from the special aircraft was the prime minister, Mr Morarji Desai.

Earlier Mr Pham inspected an interservices guard of honor. Cabinet ministers, heads of diplomatic missions and other distinguished citizens were introduced to Mr Pham.

In a brief speech at the airport, Mr Pham said he was very glad to set foot on the soil of a great country. He expressed sincere and deep gratitude for what he described as the strong, persevering and determined support by India to Vietnam's many decades of struggle for independence.

Mr Pham referred to the continued support of the Indian Government to Vietnam's task of national reconstruction and said he is convinced that the present visit will strengthen the friendly and fraternal cooperation between the two peoples.

As the two prime ministers drove together from the airport to the Rashtrapati Bhavan, where the Vietnamese leader is staying, a large crowd outside the airport shouted slogans greeting Indian-Vietnamese friendship. The route from the airport to the city was bedecked with flags of the two countries and colorful banners.

The AIR [All-India Radio] correspondent reports that the visit is the first ever by a prime minister of unified Vietnam. It is the culmination of several exchanges between the two countries at political, official and nonofficial levels in the last year and a half.

Visits Rajghat, Calcutta

BK240902Y Delhi Domestic Service in English 0830 GMT 24 Feb 78 BK

[Text] Immediately on his arrival in Delhi today, the Vietnamese prime minister visited Rajghat and paid homage to Mahatama Gandhi.

Earlier addressing people who assembled to greet him at the Calcutta airport, Mr Pham Van Dong expressed gratitude to the people of India and in particular to the people of Calcutta for their support to Vietnam.

INDIA, USSR PREPARING FOR JOINT COMMISSION TALKS

BK231111Y Delhi ISI in English 0835 GMT 23 Feb 78 BK

[Text] Preparatory official-level discussions in connection with the next meeting of the Indo-Soviet Joint Commission on Economic, Scientific and Technical Cooperation began in New Delhi on February 22. V.I. Litvinenko, deputy chairman of the USSR State Committee for Foreign and Economic Relations, is leading the Soviet team. The Indian side is led by Mantosh Sondhi, secretary, Ministry of Steel and Mines.

Seven working groups have been set up in various sectors. These are steel and mines (including coal), petroleum and oil exploration, chemicals and fertilisers, heavy machine building, communications and transport, including railways, trade and agriculture and science and technology. Indian working groups will have detailed discussions with their Soviet counterparts in their respective areas.

The regular meeting of the commission will be held at New Delhi in the first week of March 1978.

I.V. Arkhipov, deputy prime minister of the USSR, is the Soviet cochairman of this joint commission while A.B. Vajpayee, foreign minister, is the Indian cochairman. This will be the fourth meeting of the commission. The last meeting was held in Moscow from March 31 to April 5, 1976.

PAKISTANI, INDIAN AGRICULTURE MINISTERS MEET 21 FEB

BK221556Y Delhi ISI in English 0835 GMT 22 Feb 78 BK

[Text] Doctor Amir Mohammad, adviser (food and agriculture and cooperatives) to the president of Pakistan, called on Union Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation Surajit Singh Barnala in New Delhi on February 21. They discussed various aspects of agricultural economy in the two countries for over 45 minutes.

Doctor Amir Mohammad suggested an exchange of information, both technical and scientific, on the advancement of agriculture in the two countries, particularly in respect of production technology research, agricultural credit, water management and the functioning of cooperatives.

INDIAN-BANGLADESH TRADE TALKS BEGIN 23 FEB IN DELHI

BK241021Y Delhi ISI in English 0835 GMT 24 Feb 78 BK

[Text] Talks began in New Delhi on February 23 between India and Bangladesh to review trade between the two countries for the year 1978-79. The Indian delegation to the talks is led by R.D. Thapar, commerce secretary and the Bangladesh delegation by Saifur Rahman, secretary in the Ministry of Commerce of the Government of Bangladesh. Talks are expected to continue for 3 days.

Trade relations with Bangladesh are governed by trade agreement which was originally entered into in 1973 for an initial validity period of 3 years, but extended for another period of 3 years in October 1976. The agreement provides for an annual trade review, which was last held in February 1977. Up to the end of 1974, the trade between the two countries was governed by a limited payment arrangement. Effective from January 1975, the trade has been on the basis of payment in free foreign exchange. Aside from trade in normal channels, commodity and other credits have been extended to Bangladesh for utilisation of inputs of commodities and requirements by it.

India's major export items to Bangladesh include coal, engineering goods, iron and steel, chemicals and allied products, cotton manufactures and textiles, yarn and thread. India's imports from Bangladesh include items like jute, newsprint, paper, chemical elements and compounds, textiles, yarn, thread and fish.

GOVERNMENT CITES UK OFFICIAL'S REMARKS ON IMMIGRATION

BK231104Y Delhi General Overseas Service in English 1000 GMT 23 Feb 78 BK

[Text] The Indian Government has taken note of the statements made by the opposition leader in the United Kingdom, Mrs Margaret Thatcher, to end immigration in the interest of race relations. This has been stated by the external affairs minister, Mr Atal Bihari Vajpayee, in the lower house of Parliament.

He expressed the hope that the British Government will also honor the commitments of immigration laws as reiterated by the prime minister. He said there is no Commonwealth conference which is considering the problem of immigration concerning any member country.

GOVERNMENT INCREASES PATROL OF ANDAMAN ISLANDS

BK231108Y Delhi General Overseas Service in English 1000 GMT 23 Feb 78 BK

[Text] Patrolling of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands has been intensified. Disclosing this in the lower house of Parliament, the minister of state for defense said that a group of foreigners apprehended in the area on the 31st of last month are being interrogated to find out the motive of their intrusion. Of the 74 people taken into custody 49 have been sentenced to imprisonment.

RAM COMMENTS ON PURCHASE OF STRIKE AIRCRAFT

BK221127Y Delhi Domestic Service in English 0240 GMT 22 Feb 78 BK

[Text] Mr Jagjivan Ram has said that he does not think the government's decision to purchase deep penetration strike aircraft from Europe will encourage an arms race between India and Pakistan. Addressing newsmen in Banglalore, Mr Jagjivan Ram said that Pakistan already possesses similar planes. He said that the purchase of these aircraft will be linked with their manufacture ultimately in India itself. One of the conditions of the purchase will be the provision of technical know-how for their manufacture.

PATEL PRESENTS PREBUDGET REPORT TO PARLIAMENT

BK231323Y Delhi Domestic Service in English 0830 GMT 23 Feb 78 BK

[Text] The prebudget economic survey presented to Parliament today by the finance minister, Mr H.M. Patel, says the performance of the economy during the current financial year has been satisfactory in many respects. The rate of growth of the gross national product is expected to be about 5 percent as compared to 1.6 percent last year. This also compares favorably to the average growth rate of 3.9 percent in the last 4 years. The total food-grain production during the year is expected to be about 121 million tons as against 111 million tons last year. The production of groundnuts, cotton and sugarcane is also expected to be higher. However, the output of jute and [word indistinct] will be marginally lower.

The survey says the level of prices has been relatively stable. The increase in prices since March last year has been only 0.6 percent. The price behavior reflects to an extent the success of the government's policy of large and steady imports of sensitive commodities like edible oil and raw cotton, more liberal issues of government-held stocks and the tight monetary and credit policy.

The survey says the balance of payments has continued to display remarkable strength. The level of the foreign exchange reserves is currently equal to 9 months imports. Most of the constraints which hampered the growth in the past such as shortages of food and foreign exchange do not operate any longer.

However, there are certain features which warn us against any complacency. Industrial growth this year has been sluggish and is likely to be only 5 to 6 percent as compared to over 10 percent in 1976-77. Investment has been slack, though capacity utilization in several industries has improved. Power shortages have reappeared. The overall price stability conceals sharp rises in the prices of particular commodities. Finally, rising exports and invisible receipts have resulted in an accumulation of foreign exchange reserves rather than a larger inflow of much needed development and mass consumption goods from abroad.

PARLIAMENT DEBATES CENTER-STATE RELATIONS

BK230821Y Delhi Domestic Service in English 0240 GMT Feb 78 BK

[Text] In the Lok Sabha, demands for greater autonomy to some states and a full-fledged review of center-state relations touched off a heated controversy for quite some time yesterday during question hour.

The minister of state for home affairs, Mr Dhanik Lal Mandal, told the house that the government does not consider it propitious to review at present or raise a national debate on the question. He, however, agreed with a member that the political situation in the country has undergone a (?sea) of change since the last Lok Sabha elections.

When the minister began to interpret the memorandum of the West Bengal chief minister on center-state relations envisaging greater autonomy for the states, a CPI [Communist Party of India] member from West Bengal protested that the minister had not read the document properly, but Mr Mandal said the government is having a dialog with all opposition leaders on this aspect. He felt the existing provisions in the constitution are adequate and do not call for any change in the existing relations between the center and the states.

NEPAL

DPRK VICE PRESIDENT TO ARRIVE IN NEPAL 3 MARCH

BK231520Y Katmandu External Service in English 1450 GMT 23 Feb 78 BK

[Text] Vice President of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea Mr Kang Yang-uk is arriving in Katmandu on 3 March on a 6-day official visit to Nepal at the invitation of the prime minister, Mr Kirti Nidhi Bista. The minister of economic affairs of the People's Democratic Republic of Korea is to accompany the vice president, Mr Kang Yang-uk.

KOIRALA HOLDS PRESS CONFERENCE AFTER HIS RELEASE

BK231057Y Hong Kong AFP in English 0941 GMT 23 Feb 78 BK

[Text] Katmandu, Feb. 23 (AFP)--Deposed Premier Biseswore Prasad Koirala told the press today that he would not leave the country until pending government cases against him for treason are "over".

Mr Koirala, who was released early this morning on the condition that he will voluntarily appear before the tribunal on the date stipulated, said: "I am waiting for the trial to be over".

Mr. Koirala, who looked feeble, said: "I will make no appeal for release and to go abroad. If they release me on their own that is another thing and in that case I will take the opportunity to go abroad".

Mr. Koirala refused to make any political statement but emphasized: "I do not want concern for my health to dilute my political mission for national unity".

When asked to comment on his release Mr. Koirala said: "As far as I am concerned the situation has not changed. The only difference is that I am not under police custody".

"To make me happy the situation has to be materially altered. There is no material change on my side so far," Mr. Koirala added.

Mr. Koirala was indirectly referring to five remaining treason charges--each carrying the death penalty if he is found guilty.

He expressed gratitude to King Birendra for his second intervention with the court which "enabled me to meet my family members".

"Before proceeding to New York for treatment, I should like to have an audience with the king. I am waiting for the king's return so that I can request an audience," he added.

King Birendra is currently touring the far western development region to inspect and supervise developmental efforts in those areas.

Referring to his colleague Mr. Ganesh Man Singh, who is also under detention separately and facing charges of treason, Mr. Koirala said: "I am really not happy over leaving Mr. Singh behind. His health is not really good".

Mr. Koirala himself appeared this morning before the tribunal to hear the trial of the Sarlahi Syangja bomb case. Jorunalists were allowed to talk to Mr. Koirala outside the courtroom.

Receives Two More Acquittals

OW231932Y Hong Kong AFP in English 1856 GMT 23 Feb 78 OW

[Excerpt] Katmandu Feb 23 (AFP)--The former Nepalese prime minister, Mr Biseswore Prasad Koirala, has been acquitted of a total of four state offences, with two more judgements today in his favour.

The tribunal before which he appeared said that Mr Koirala was not guilty of the charges brought against him in the Sarlahi and Syangja arms smuggling cases.

The judgement held that the evidence produced by the prosecutor was based mainly on the confession of a co-defendant, Mr Koirala's advocates said. In his verdict the tribunal judge, Mr Janak Man Shrestra, ruled that this evidence "was not convincing", was full of "contradiction" and was not "independent and credible".

According to counsel of the former premier, the judgement also held that no independent evidence had been produced by prosecution to show that Mr Koirala had engaged in conspiracy with the other defendant, as is required to prove the treason charge.

With this fourth acquittal Mr Koirala now faces three more charges of treason including one concerning the armed ursurge in Okhaldhunga in December 1974. They are expected to be over by Monday.

PAKISTAN

HAQ MEETS WITH PRC DELEGATION IN ISLAMABAD 22 FEB

BK2311124Y Karachi Overseas Service in Urdu 0800 GMT 23 Feb 78 BK

[Text] The chief of army staff and chief martial law administrator has expressed the confidence that Pakistan and China will always support each other to safeguard their independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. Gen Mohammad Ziaul Haq was speaking at a banquet given by him in honor of the visiting delegation of the Chinese People's Assocation for Friendship with Foreign Countries in Islamabad last night.

He said friendship between Pakistan and China is firmly based on our common dedication to the high principles of international conduct and to the promotion of international peace. He said that while upholding these principles, the great Chinese people and their leaders have always given Pakistan resolute support during difficult times in the country's history. The people of Pakistan can never forget this support.

The chief martial law administrator said the visit of the Chinese people's friendship delegation reflected the cordial sentiments of the brotherly people of China toward Pakistan, which greatly values these sentiments.

Referring to his visit to China last December, the chief martial law administrator said he had very valuable and friendly talks with Chairman Hua Kuo-feng and other Chinese leaders and had returned home with renewed faith in China-Pakistan friendship. He said China's astounding successes in all fields is a dynamic example for all developing countries. He expressed the confidence that under the (?wise) leadership of Chairman Hua Kuo-feng the great people of China will achieve every success in their efforts to accomplish goals set by the late Prime Minister Chou En-lai.

In reply, the leader of the Chinese people's friendship delegation, Mr Wang Ping-nan, said friendship between China and Pakistan has remained unchanged despite tremendous changes in the international scene and that China would continue to support Pakistan in its just struggle to safeguard its national independence and combat outside interference. He said Pakistan had strengthened its relations with the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America and thus made a great contribution toward the consolidation of unity of the developing countries.

He said Pakistan had won universal acclaim from the people of the whole world and its international prestige was increasing. He expressed the hope that the people and Government of Pakistan would surmount all their difficulties and make even greater achievements.

HAQ RECEIVES MESSAGE FROM SRI LANKAN PRESIDENT

BK2310339Y Karachi Overseas Service in Urdu 0800 GMT 23 Feb 78 BK

[Text] The visiting Sri Lanka finance minister, Mr Ronald de Mel, called on the chief of army staff and chief martial law administrator, Gen Mohammad Ziaul Haq in Rawalpindi last evening and handed him a special message from Sri Lanka President Mr Jayewardene.

The Sri Lanka finance minister stayed with the chief martial law administrator for some time and exchanged views on matters of mutual interest.

DEMONSTRATORS RIOT IN PROTEST OF PPP LEADER'S ARREST

BK241135Y Hong Kong AFP in English 1123 GMT 24 Feb 78 BK

[Text] Karachi Feb 24 (AFP)--Police fired tear gas shells and charged with batons to disperse a street demonstration yesterday in Hala Town, 140 miles (235 kilometers) from here.

The demonstrators were protesting against the arrest on Wednesday of the vice-president of the Pakistan People's Party headed by the jailed former prime minister, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto.

A government press note last night accused the demonstrators of erecting roadblocks, burning a trolley car and tractor, halting a passenger train and trying to set it afire.

Forty-nine people were arrested and face trial by a martial law court for arson, looting and damaging public property.

SRI LANKA

MINISTER HINTS AT PLOT TO OVERTHROW GOVERNMENT

BK231317Y Colombo Domestic Service in English 1245 GMT 23 Feb 78 BK

[Text] The minister of education, Mr Nissanka Wijeratne, told the National State Assembly today that the government decided to keep schools closed today and tomorrow due to efforts made to mislead students and incite them to boycott classes and create disturbances in the country. The minister made this observation in reply to a request by the leader of the opposition, Mr A. Anathalingam, for a statement on the decision regarding the closure of schools and the reasons leading to the situation.

Clarifying matters further, Mr Wijeratne, said that the government will not hesitate to keep the schools closed further if it was necessary. Facts had been disclosed regarding an effort to overthrow the government through this incident.

The minister said that several persons had been taken into custody for questioning in this connection. Several representatives of organizations met the minister last week and held discussions in regard to the abolishing of the standardization scheme. The boycott of the classes had been organized in schools after these discussions. Several instances of representatives from teachers associations being assaulted in connection with future transfers have also been reported. Reports have also been received regarding demonstrations.

The minister pointed out that the purpose of these acts was to put innocent students in the forefront and create disturbances and seek political advantages. He said that this step was taken to protect the students and to safeguard peace in the country. He said that as a custodian of the sacred Tooth Relic, he assures the Sinhala community that it would not suffer injustice by the abolition of the standardization scheme.

Schools Closed

BK231047Y Delhi General Overseas Service in English 1000 GMT 23 Feb 78 BK

[Text] The Sri Lanka Government has ordered the closure of all schools throughout the country for today and tomorrow. This has been done to prevent a possible outbreak of violence between the majority and minority communities.

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